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SOVIET COMING MISSILE REQUIREMENTS

In estimating Soviet missile requirements, we have proceeded on the basis of two general assumptions: 1) that there will be no international agreement on control of outer space or limitation of armaments, and 2) that the USSR would plan for general war even though it has no intention of initiating general war and deliberately avoids courses of action which incur grave risk of leading to general war.

The first assumption implies that the USSR will not be restrained by treaty obligations in developing, producing, or introducing into operational units any missile systems which it regards as necessary or desirable for the achievement of Soviet objectives. The second assumption, which is consistent with our estimates of likely Soviet courses of action in the next five years, implies that the USSR would establish missile requirements for general war, but does not imply that it would go beyond the design and feasibility stage for any particular missile system considered by Soviet military planners or for all missile systems which they decide are required. Some missile systems will certainly be developed beyond the stage of feasibility tests, produced in quantity, and introduced into operational units. But which ones will be pushed and how far the USSR will attempt to go in any particular category of missiles depends on Soviet technical and economic capabilities, the relative priority of competing demands on those capabilities, and the strategy adopted to carry out their intentions.

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In regard to Soviet capabilities, we have tempered our judgment of missile requirements by taking account of the present and prospective state of the art in missile and space technology. However, we have not explicitly eliminated any requirement on the grounds that it cannot be met by a certain time or during the period of this estimate. The controlling factor is the nature and time-phase of the Western threat as seen by the USSR, not Soviet technical capabilities. The latter is held in abeyance. Consequently, some of the estimated requirements might be beyond Soviet capabilities during the period 1958-1966, while others might be within their technical capabilities but not attainable soon enough to meet the threat. Similarly, economic limitations might prevent the USSR from producing certain missiles or associated equipment in significant operational quantities, but we have not eliminated the requirement for this reason.

Whether any estimated missile requirement can be met by the USSR during the period 1958-1966 is largely determined by the priority assigned to the task. There are, of course, outside limits to Soviet capabilities — not only in the obvious sense that the technical and economic resources of the USSR at any given time are finite, but more importantly in the sense that providing such resources beyond a certain point yields diminishing returns and may actually retard the attainment of the objective in question. For example, the research and development effort on a given missile can

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Become diffuse and disorganized precisely because too many technical personnel are assigned to the project. Within these broad limits, however, the capabilities of the USSR depend on how it allocates its resources and hence on the relative priority of competing demands.

We believe that the USSR has given very high priority to its missile program, but recognise that not all missile systems have been or will be assigned equal priority. From the evidence to date, it appears that the development of a surface-to-air missile system (such as that around Moscow) was initially regarded as the most urgent requirement and that the development of long-range surface-to-surface ballistic missiles was considered to be equal, or nearly equal, in priority. At the present time the ICBM probably has greater priority than any other missile system, since 1) defensive missile systems are not being put into operational use with the same degree of urgency that characterized the establishment of the surface-to-air missile complex around Moscow, 2) there is no evidence of increased priority being assigned to air-to-surface missiles, and 3) substantial progress on the development of surface-to-surface ballistic missiles with ranges up to 1000 n.m. has already been made. It is reasonable to expect that highest priority will continue to be given to the ICBM until prototypes are introduced into operational units. Beyond that point, the relative priority between missiles and other weapon systems and between the various types and categories of missiles themselves is very uncertain.

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These provisional judgments concerning relative priority will be affected by the subsequent assessment of Soviet technical and economic capabilities, particularly by the estimated trends in those resources which determine future capabilities. They will also be affected by whatever estimates, tacit or otherwise, are made of Soviet strategy — particularly the extent to which the USSR stresses the concept of a deterrent force and intends to use the ICBM primarily as a political threat. Accordingly, the missile requirements outlined below, even if they are all within Soviet capabilities, do not necessarily indicate the most probable assortment of missiles that the USSR will develop and produce.

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